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SUBJECT: MONTENEGRO: 2006-2007 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS  
CONTROL STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR) PART I: DRUGS AND  
CHEMICAL CONTROL

This is an Embassy Podgorica cable. It has not been  
cleared with Embassy Belgrade.

BELOW FOLLOWS THE 2007 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL  
STRATEGY REPORT (INCSR) FOR MONTENEGRO:

#### I. Summary

Montenegro is used by organized crime groups as a transit country for cannabis from Albania and Kosovo, and smaller amounts of other narcotics from the Middle East and Latin America, destined for the Western Balkans and Western Europe. A small domestic market for illegal drugs exists. The Government of Montenegro is implementing a comprehensive action plan against illegal drugs, and is seeking close law enforcement relationships with other regional states. Montenegro became an independent state on June 3, 2006, and is in the process of becoming a signatory to relevant international conventions and agreements, including the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

#### II. Status of Country

If left unchecked, the use of Montenegrin territory by drug smugglers would tend to undermine political stability and economic growth, and contribute to crime in neighboring states. The Government of Montenegro estimates that only a small percentage of the illegal drugs entering the country are for the domestic market. Protection of its borders is a national priority, and the United States and other international donors support those efforts; in particular, U.S. donations of ocean and lake patrol craft have been effective in interrupting water-borne smuggling.

#### III. Country Actions Against Drugs in 2006

Policy Initiatives. Changes passed by the Parliament in 2006 to the domestic criminal surveillance law will allow the use of improved methods and additional technical means in investigating crimes, including drug trafficking. The adoption in 2004 of the new Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Code included anti-narcotics provisions meeting objectives in the 1988 UN Drug Convention, and included Montenegro's first Law on Witness Protection, creating a specialized police unit for this purpose as well; in 2006, Montenegro continued discussion with neighboring states on regional cooperation in witness protection.

Law Enforcement Efforts. Training of police officers in techniques for combating organized crime and financial crimes remains central to coursework at the national

police training center, re-established as a professional Police Academy on October 25. Independent Montenegro has retained the separate counter-narcotics service in the police force, and is looking to coordinate its efforts with the police surveillance unit, border police, the customs service, and the domestic intelligence service. Montenegrin authorities report that through the end of September 2006, police arrested 320 persons on felony drug charges in 280 cases, with an additional 42 persons charged with misdemeanor drug charges in 38 cases. The police seized 936.7 kilograms of cannabis, 3.3 kilograms of heroin, 8 grams of hashish, 69 grams of cocaine, 332 tablets of Ecstasy, 4.8 kilograms of precursor chemicals. Two seizures of marijuana crops were made in 2006: one of 400 seedlings, the second of 670 seedlings.

Corruption. Corruption and the perception of corruption are prevalent in Montenegro, and affects both law enforcement and the judiciary. The Government attempts to identify, prosecute and punish instances of official corruption, but does not specify whether the acts underlying specific disciplinary actions and prosecutions are narcotics-related or not. Narcotics-related corruption is addressed by laws that criminalize any and all corrupt activities by government employees. The Government has criminalized the production and distribution of narcotic and psychotropic drugs as well as the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions, and enforces these laws as a matter of policy. There are no reports that senior government officials engage in, encourage, or facilitate the production and distribution of narcotic and psychotropic drugs as well or the laundering of proceeds from illegal drug transactions.

Agreements and Treaties. Montenegro became an

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independent state on June 3, 2006, and is in the process of becoming a signatory to relevant international conventions and agreements, including the 1988 UN Drug Convention. Montenegro has signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with neighboring states to facilitate cooperation in the fight against all forms of crime. As of October 2006, Montenegro has such MOUs with Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia, as well as with UNMIK in Kosovo. Montenegro signed an international agreement on Witness Protection Relocation and Cooperation with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in July 2006.

Drug Flow/Transit. Montenegro is used by organized crime groups as a transit point for drug smuggling, due to the country's central location, topography - both coastal and mountainous - and its past reputation as a facilitator of smuggling. Cannabis is smuggled from producers in Albania and Kosovo, en route to the Western Balkans and Western Europe; heroin from the Middle East transits Albania and Kosovo, crossing Montenegro before being transported further into Western Europe. A joint action by Montenegro, Serbia, and Italy at the end of 2004 into the first half of 2005 seized 200 kilograms of cocaine from Latin America before it could be smuggled into Western Europe.

Domestic Programs (Demand Reduction). The Government plans to re-convene its expert group to update its 2003-2006 action plan to combat drug use among children and youth. The group includes participants from the Interior Ministry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Education Ministry, Justice Ministry, Labor and Social Welfare Ministry, Customs service, local governments, and NGOs. The Government has recognized the potential problem of drug use -- especially synthetic drugs -- among foreign tourists, and the effect upon Montenegro's tourism sector, which is a central pillar of the economy.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives. The Government of Montenegro works closely with the United States and EU countries in reforming and improving its law enforcement and judicial capacity. The United States has provided extensive technical assistance, equipment donations, and training, to the police, customs service, and judiciary. Several U.S. Departments have programs that directly and indirectly support counter-narcotics activities in Montenegro, including the Department of Justice (ICITAP and OPDAT), Department of Homeland Security (Montenegro Border Security Program, and US Coast Guard), Department of Defense (Defense Threat Reduction Agency), Department of the Treasury, and Department of State (Export Control and Border Security/EXBS, and SEED foreign assistance funding of Justice, Treasury, and DHS programs). The programs are aimed at professionalizing the police and customs service, improving the ability of Montenegro to control its borders at land and at sea, improve prosecution of corruption and organized crime, including money laundering and illicit trafficking, and increase the ability of the judiciary to effectively address serious crime. SEED-funded speakers have also helped publicize anti-drug campaigns carried out by local NGOs.

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